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Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*

Lao People's Democratic Republic

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Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
	Introduction	1–4	3
I.	Summary of the proceedings of the review process	5–120	3
	A. Presentation by the State under review	5–24	3
	B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review	25–120	5
II.	Conclusions and/or recommendations	121–122	13
Annex			
	Composition of the delegation		26

Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 of 18 June 2007, held its twenty-first session from 19 to 30 January 2015. The review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic was held at the 4th meeting on 20 January 2015. The delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic was headed by Phongsavath Boupha, Minister, Head of the President's Office and Chairman of National Steering on Human Rights. At its 10th meeting, held on 23 January 2015, the Working Group adopted the report on the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

2. On 13 January 2015, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic: Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire and Qatar.

3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to resolution 16/21, the following documents were issued for the review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic:

(a) A national report submitted/written presentation prepared in accordance with paragraph 15 (a) (A/HRC/WG.6/21/LAO/1);

(b) A compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) (A/HRC/WG.6/21/LAO/2);

(c) A summary prepared by OHCHR in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) (A/HRC/WG.6/21/LAO/3).

4. A list of questions prepared in advance by Belgium, Germany, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America was transmitted to the Lao People's Democratic Republic through the troika. These questions are available on the extranet of the universal periodic review (UPR).

I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

A. Presentation by the State under review

5. The head of the delegation noted that, after the founding of the Lao People's Democratic Republic 40 years ago, the implementation of the two strategic tasks of national safeguarding and development had always had the ultimate goal of creating conditions for the multi-ethnic Lao people to live in peace, freedom and prosperity so that they could fully enjoy their human rights.

6. He reported that the Government had attached importance to the recommendations made in the 2010 UPR review, highlighting that the national report, the outcome report and recommendations from the first UPR cycle had been translated into Lao and distributed among government officials, stakeholders and the general public. The Government also tasked the relevant line ministries and State organizations to implement the recommendations related to their respective roles and functions. Many of the recommendations had been integrated into the Seventh Five-year National Socioeconomic Development Plan 2011–2015, and were being implemented through laws, policies, strategies and action plans.

7. The Government established the National Steering Committee on Human Rights in 2012, which led the preparation of the national report for the current review with the participation of all relevant Government agencies. Stakeholder consultations were held with civil society organizations, international non-governmental organizations and international development partners.

8. He emphasized the fact that the Lao People's Democratic Republic had continued to improve its governance and public administration to be more effective, transparent, accountable and participatory and to provide better services to the people. The Government was currently implementing the Legal Sector Master Plan on the Development of the Rule of Law by 2020, taking into account the Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels. In strengthening the rule of law, the National Assembly had adopted or amended more than 100 laws in the political, judicial, national defence, public security, economic, social, cultural and environmental domains.

9. He further noted that the constitutional amendment process was transparent and participatory. Inputs from the consultations were being studied and considered by the National Drafting Committee. The final draft amended Constitution would be made available for comments and inputs from the public.

10. The Government attaches importance to the prevention and combating of corruption through the implementation of the Law on Anti-Corruption, other related laws and legal instruments, particularly the decree on the declaration of assets for government officials at all levels.

11. He added that most of the Millennium Development Goals had been achieved or were on track to be achieved by the end of 2015, and that most of the recommendations from the first UPR cycle, especially those related to economic, social and cultural rights, such as the rights to health, education, food, housing, land, and the right to development and poverty reduction, had been progressively realized.

12. He also emphasized that the Government had put in place a policy governing the judicial sector in efforts towards ensuring the rule of law, equality before the law and the court, due process of law and fair trial.

13. He highlighted that the rights to freedoms of expression, assembly and association were guaranteed in the Constitution, laws and decrees. Violation of these fundamental freedoms constituted a criminal offence punishable by the penal law. Likewise, freedom of religion or belief was also protected in the Constitution and laws, especially the Prime Minister's Decree 92.

14. He stated that the Government had continued to improve prison conditions and attached importance to training prison officials on international norms and principles concerning prison management and the treatment of offenders.

15. He noted that the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities were protected and promoted through the implementation of the relevant constitutional provisions and specific laws, decrees, national stratergies and action plans.

16. He stressed that, in the national processes for making, applying and enforcing laws, treaty obligations were taken into consideration and, in case of conflict between treaty obligations and national legislation, the treaty obligation shall prevail.

17. The Government attaches importance to raising awareness of and disseminating information concerning human rights treaties and the UPR recommendations, and to developing the capacity of government officials and stakeholders to implement them.

18. Moreover, the Government extended its goodwill cooperation by providing information and clarification to the special procedures of the Human Rights Council in respect of their queries, questions or issues of interest concerning human rights practices in the country.

19. At the regional level, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has contributed to the development of human rights in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in terms of institution-building and standard-setting. The Lao People's Democratic Republic actively participates in the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children and has contributed to the drafting of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, the ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Children.

20. In addition to the institutionalized bilateral human rights dialogue with a number of States, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has exchanged views and experiences on human rights with some other countries to share good practices on human rights implementation.

21. He added that, despite the achievements made, the country faced a number of constraints and challenges, including unexploded ordnance, underdeveloped infrastructure, natural disasters, disease outbreaks, limited human resources and budget constraints.

22. To overcome these challenges and constraints, the Government has set priorities focusing on socioeconomic development and poverty reduction, the rule of law, the improvement of governance, continuing efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, continuing efforts on unexploded ordnance clearance, the improvement of public health service, education and the protection of women, children and other vulnerable groups.

23. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is considering the ratification of additional human rights conventions, including the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW). The Lao People's Democratic Republic will continue to disseminate information on human rights and translate human rights obligations and commitments into national policies, laws, strategies, programmes and projects. It will also consider inviting special rapporteurs to visit on a case-by-case basis. An invitation will be soon sent to the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context to visit the country in the course of 2015.

24. He noted Lao People's Democratic Republic's candidacy for membership of the Human Rights Council for the period 2016–2018, highlighting that, if elected, it would do its utmost to contribute to the effectiveness and efficacy of the Council, and would continue to make concerted efforts to better the human rights of the Lao people.

B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review

25. During the interactive dialogue, 73 delegations made statements. The recommendations made during the dialogue can be found in section II of the present report.

26. Norway noted the acceptance of its recommendation on maternal and child mortality and access to education made at the first UPR cycle. Norway encouraged a focus on achieving those Millennium Development Goals that were off-track.

27. Paraguay commended the accession to international human rights instruments, the revision of legislation aimed at protecting women and children's rights, and several

legislative amendments adopted since the first review. It appreciated efforts to fight poverty and to establish mechanisms to promote human rights.

28. The Philippines commended the commitment to enhancing human rights and to the UPR process, including the efforts to disseminate the outcome of the first UPR cycle. It noted that the accepted recommendations were included in national plans.

29. Poland appreciated the progress made, including the enactment or amendment of several laws and the setting up of several inter-agency mechanisms, while stating that further work was needed to fully implement international human rights standards.

30. Portugal welcomed the accession to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) and the progress in the promotion of women's rights.

31. The Republic of Korea commended the Legal Sector Master Plan on the Development of the Rule of Law and the recently enacted legislation and expressed hope that the Plan would be translated into concrete actions.

32. The Russian Federation appreciated the progress made in the implementation of a series of international human rights instruments and noted the acceptance of a series of measures taken for the protection of women's rights.

33. Serbia commended the commitment to the right to health, which was demonstrated through increased access to health services and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal target on under-five mortality. It encouraged the Lao People's Democratic Republic to adopt the law on combating human trafficking.

34. Sierra Leone commended the plans in the field of the rule of law and congratulated the Lao People's Democratic Republic on the achievement of most of the Millennium Development Goals. It encouraged it to address reported discrimination against minorities and religious groups and land-grabbing practices in industrial exploitation.

35. Nepal appreciated the various legislative, procedural and institutional measures taken in implementing the recommendations from the first UPR cycle. Nepal encouraged the Lao People's Democratic Republic to build on its success in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

36. Slovenia commended the efforts made in the promotion of gender equality, development and poverty eradication. Slovenia was concerned about reported discrimination against certain ethnic groups and human trafficking into and out of the country.

37. Spain acknowledged the role played by the country within ASEAN. While noting the ratification of most human rights treaties, it stated that further progress needed to be made to comply with article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Spain expressed concern about recent legislative amendments restricting the activity of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

38. Sri Lanka commended the accession to CAT in 2012. It welcomed the Decree on Persons with Disabilities, and the prioritization of poverty reduction in the national development programme.

39. Referring to the case of the disappearance of a civil society activist in December 2012, Sweden noted that no results had been disclosed, despite a government statement that there would be a thorough investigation into the case.

40. Switzerland welcomed the ratification of CAT. It deplored the restrictions on the rights on freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association emphasizing the core role played by independent civil society actors in promoting these rights. Switzerland

regretted that the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had been impeded in the country.

41. Thailand commended the significant progress made in aligning its domestic legislation with international human rights obligations and in implementing the national development plan. Thailand expressed willingness to share knowledge in realizing the right to development.

42. Timor-Leste appreciated the continuing efforts of the Government to improve the human rights situation, in particular the Law on the Development and Protection of Women.

43. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland recognized the progress since the first UPR cycle, notably the ratification of CAT and improved international access to Hmong refugees. It was concerned about restrictions on civil society, land expropriation and compensation mechanisms.

44. The United States of America was concerned about restrictions on the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, association and religion, and the right to participate in genuine elections. It called on the Government to train local officials on the rights of all to freely manifest and practice one's religion.

45. Uruguay appreciated the Socioeconomic Development Plan 2011–2015, which has allowed sustainable economic growth. It noted that the Plan for 2016–2020 took into consideration poverty reduction, equity and human development. Uruguay highlighted the ratification of CAT.

46. Uzbekistan commended the progress made since the first UPR cycle and welcomed the plan to strengthen the rule of law, the constitutional and legal reforms being carried out in its framework, the ratification of CAT and cooperation with United Nations human rights mechanisms.

47. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela acknowledged the progress towards implementation of the UPR recommendations, such as the ratification of CAT. It noted the achievement of the most Millennium Development Goals, and poverty reduction through the Socioeconomic Development Plan.

48. Viet Nam welcomed the efforts in implementing the accepted recommendations from the first UPR, notably its remarkable progress in poverty alleviation, human development and improvements in governance.

49. Yemen noted that, despite obstacles, the Lao People's Democratic Republic had taken legislative measures to bring its laws in line with international commitments. It highlighted the ratification of most international human rights treaties.

50. Algeria commended the implementation of the recommendations in the sphere of governance, public administration and the rule of law since the first UPR cycle. Algeria praised the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the ratification of CAT in 2012.

51. Angola welcomed the accession to various human rights instruments, particularly CAT. Angola noted with satisfaction the adoption of the national plan for combating corruption and the modification of related legislation in 2012.

52. Argentina commended the adoption in 2014 of a decree aimed at promoting the rights of people with disabilities, and encouraged the country to accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It noted the intention to further ratify international human rights instruments.

53. Australia welcomed the commitment to incorporating recently ratified human rights conventions into domestic legislation. It raised concerns about the attempts to increase internet censorship, the socioeconomic development of the civil society, the disappearance of Sombath Somphone and the unequal treatment of minority religious groups.

54. Bangladesh noted the implementation of various projects related to poverty eradication and the decline in the percentage of people living in poverty. It praised the efforts made on children and women's rights.

55. Belarus noted with satisfaction the wide consultations conducted with civil society in the preparation of the second national report. It appreciated the efforts in poverty reduction and development.

56. Belgium urged an extension of a standing invitation to all special procedures. It expressed concerns about restrictions on freedom of expression, freedom of press, assembly and association, and enquired about the status of the investigation into the disappearance of Sombath Somphone.

57. Bhutan praised the enactment and amendment of important national laws resulting in positive reforms in human rights development since its first UPR. It commended the establishment of several inter-agency mechanisms to promote and protect human rights.

58. Brazil welcomed the implementation of the Seventh National Socioeconomic Plan and the efforts for unexploded ordnance survey and clearance. It noted with satisfaction the ratification of CAT in 2012, and encouraged a comprehensive definition of discrimination in compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

59. Brunei Darussalam welcomed the reforms in the national education sector to improve better access to education in urban and rural areas. It commended the expansion of the public health network, the implementation of health insurance and free health treatment for children under five.

60. Cambodia commended the promotion of gender equality and the protection of children and women's rights through various international conventions as well as national strategies and programmes. It praised the development of capacity-building on human rights, including training for Government and law enforcement officials.

61. Canada enquired about the steps taken to ensure full compliance with CAT at all levels of authority. It expressed concern about the condition and treatment of thousands of Hmong people repatriated from Thailand, and their freedom of religion and belief.

62. Chile highlighted several initiatives aimed at implementing the recommendations from the first UPR cycle, particularly the 2009 Master Plan on Promoting the Rule of Law.

63. China appreciated implementation of the accepted recommendations from the first cycle. It noted the progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, strengthening the education sector, health, culture and adequate housing.

64. Costa Rica noted the progress made since the first cycle. It highlighted measures to ensure the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights and to fight poverty. It acknowledged reforms to guarantee the rule of law inviting the country to continue such efforts.

65. Cuba noted implementation of the accepted recommendations from the first UPR cycle, and human rights challenges faced by the country. It commended not only the efforts to reduce poverty, but also the national strategies aimed at reforming the health and education sectors.

66. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea highlighted the efforts to ensure political stability and peace noting the series of measures taken in promoting civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

67. The Democratic Republic of the Congo praised the efforts to implement the accepted recommendations of the first UPR cycle, making reference to the adoption and amendments of 90 laws. It praised the efforts made to reduce poverty and the ratification of CAT.

68. Djibouti welcomed the participatory and broad consultative approach to include all public institutions and NGOs in drafting the national report, reflecting a realistic assessment of the human rights situation in the country.

69. Egypt welcomed the positive policy and legislative reforms, including accession to CAT. It acknowledged that unexploded ordnance constituted a major obstacle that negatively impacts the Government's efforts to promote human rights.

70. Estonia noted with satisfaction the progress made in women's participation at the political level and the involvement of women in government and local administration at all levels. It expressed concern about the prevalence of violence against children at homes and at schools, and noted the deficiencies in practice in the right to freedom of expression and access to the Internet.

71. Ethiopia commended implementation of a significant number of recommendations from the first UPR. It appreciated the adoption of the Seventh National Socioeconomic Development Plan, designed to reduce poverty and address the root causes of underdevelopment.

72. Finland stated that more progress was needed with respect to the human rights of the most vulnerable groups such as women, children and ethnic groups. It stressed the instrumental role played by the human rights defenders in society referring to the disappearance of Sombath Somphone.

73. France welcomed the ratification of CAT and the progress made in social and economic rights-related areas. It deplored the severe restrictions imposed on civil society.

74. Germany thanked the delegation for the information provided on its advance questions.

75. The delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic reiterated the commitment of the Government to maintaining equality, justice and the rule of law. As regards Sombath Somphone, it mentioned that cases of disappearance happened throughout the world, sometimes as a result of conflict with criminal groups. Some cases are resolved expeditiously, others might require years to resolve, while many cases are still pending, despite the fact that today States have advanced investigation technologies. The delegation clarified that the Investigation Committee was always open to views or suggestions to help the investigation, and was ready to receive suggestions from any interested parties with regard to the ongoing investigation. The delegation gave assurances that the authorities were still conducting its investigations and would continue to conduct a thorough investigation into this case in order to find the truth and bring perpetrators to justice in accordance with the law.

76. The delegation cited the important judicial reforms that had taken place since the first UPR review, including the adoption of the Law on Lawyers, which has the substantive goal of ensuring that lawyers carry out their work effectively and in adherence of an enshrined professional code.

77. The delegation emphasized that the death penalty was maintained in its legal system in accordance with international human rights standards, and that there had been a moratorium on executions for some years.

78. The delegation noted that the Decree on the Management and Protection of Religious Activities was undergoing revision to ensure compliance with international treaty obligations, including article 18 of ICCPR, relevant UPR recommendations and those of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief.

79. The delegation stated that the Government had implemented measures on development and on poverty reduction, especially as regards ethnic minorities. Penal Law prohibited all acts of discrimination based on ethnicity, and barriers to participation on the basis of ethnicity are considered punishable.

80. The Lao People's Democratic Republic specified its commitment to ethnic diversity in national governance, highlighting that all ethnic groups play an increasing role in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the nation.

81. The delegation noted that, in implementing the relocation policy of the Seventh National Socioeconomic Development Plan, the Government attached importance to preserving culture and livelihoods through public consultation meetings while creating suitable and necessary conditions for new development sites.

82. With respect to the Hmongs returning from Thailand, the delegation emphasized that Hmong people had equal rights to travel documents, passports and border passes.

83. In addition, the delegation stressed the strategic goal to eradicate mass poverty by 2015, and to graduate from the status of least developed country by 2020, noting that the Government was presently formulating the next five-year National Socioeconomic Development Plan for the period 2016–2020, with a focus on poverty eradication, equity growth and human resource development.

84. The delegation highlighted that education and health-care services in urban and rural areas had been improved as regards accessibility and quality.

85. The delegation noted that additional resources were required in order to achieve by the end of 2015 the targets of the Millennium Development Goals in the areas of nutrition, gender equality in primary education, the reduction of maternal and child mortality, the environment and unexploded ordnance clearance. The delegation referred to unexploded ordnance as a major humanitarian risk factor and a significant obstacle to development.

86. The delegation also noted that consultations had been held with stakeholders in formulating the guidelines to implement Prime Minister's Decree No. 013/PM, 2010, on international NGOs. The delegation went on to state that the Government had promulgated the Decree on Association No. 115/PM, 2009, and the Decree on Foundations No. 149/PM, 2011, which are in the process of improvement. Since opening for registrations in 2009, 147 associations and 10 foundations had officially registered.

87. In addition, the Government has attached great importance on the prevention of human trafficking. The country participated in the ASEAN and Greater Mekong submission framework as well as the implementation of the Australia-Asia Programme to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

88. The delegation noted that violations of individual freedoms of speech, writing, assembly and association were criminal offenses under Penal Law of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. In 2014, the Government issued a decree on the Internet in order to regulate social media. The decree forms a legal basis for the exercise of the right to freedom of access to and expression of opinion online.

89. Regarding penitentiaries, the delegation highlighted that the Government attached importance to building and developing prison infrastructures by allocating government budget to improve the living conditions and well-being of inmates. The delegation also noted that the Somsanga Rehabilitation Centre established in 1996 provided drug detoxification, rehabilitation and vocational training activities. Since its establishment, 25,984 drug-addicted patients had been treated at the Centre.

90. Ghana welcomed the steps taken to reduce poverty, raise the standard of living and improve labour laws, including the enactment of a social security law.

91. The Holy See commended steps to reduce poverty, improve health care and provide greater access to education, and ratification of CAT. It stated, however, that some situations required urgent attention.

92. Honduras acknowledged efforts to implement previous UPR recommendations, including poverty alleviation. It welcomed actions aimed at prioritizing gender equality and eliminating discrimination against women, laws and plans to fight human trafficking, and the Legal Sector Master Plan on the Development of the Rule of Law.

93. Hungary commended the ratification of CAT, and recognized the amendments to Penal Law and Criminal Procedure Law. It expressed concern about reports of discrimination against Christians and certain ethnic groups, while noting processes to amend the Prime Minister's Decree on Management and Protection of Religion.

94. India welcomed efforts to align domestic legislation with international human rights instruments and noted the establishment of the National Steering Committee on Human Rights. It praised National Assembly priorities towards development, measures to combat human trafficking and achievements in addressing violence against women.

95. Indonesia appreciated efforts to implement the Legal Sector Master Plan on the Development of the Rule of Law; and welcomed the National Socioeconomic Development Plan. It acknowledged contributions to regional human rights through the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights.

96. The Islamic Republic of Iran noted improvements in education for children in urban and rural areas through the National Education Reform Strategy, and appreciated the National Action Plan on Anti-Human Trafficking.

97. Ireland noted the progress made in combating human trafficking, including the establishment of a Steering Committee and National Action Plan. Ireland expressed deep concern about perceived failures to adequately investigate allegations of enforced disappearance of human rights defenders and discrimination against religious and other minorities.

98. Italy commended the ratification of CAT and the adoption of legislative measures to better implement human rights protections. Italy welcomed the de facto moratorium on the death penalty and the intention to revise Penal Law in accordance with article 6 of ICCPR.

99. Japan praised the engagement with ASEAN and the ratification of core human rights conventions. It appreciated the preparation to ratify ICPPED, noting the disappearance of a human rights defender, as well as measures to protect women and children. It encouraged measures to guarantee freedom of expression and association.

100. Kuwait noted efforts to promote human rights, particularly in the economic, social and cultural fields, and to combat poverty and fulfil the Millennium Development Goals. It encouraged the Lao People's Democratic Republic to continue the efforts to promote the rights to work, education and health.

101. Latvia welcomed the steps taken to combat corruption and eradicate poverty. It encouraged cooperation with treaty bodies and special procedures while appreciating active participation within ASEAN. It welcomed efforts to ensure access to media and the Internet, while expressing concern about restrictions on freedom of expression.

102. Lebanon underscored the willingness to implement the Fifth Legislative Plan of the National Assembly and the Seventh National Socioeconomic Development Plan. It welcomed the accession to CAT and efforts to prevent torture.

103. Luxembourg commended the socioeconomic progress achieved since the first review and encouraged the authorities to ensure that domestic policies support equitable development throughout the country while paying particular attention to vulnerable groups.

104. Malaysia praised the steps taken to implement recommendations relating to gender violence and the trafficking of women and girls. It welcomed continuing efforts to strengthen the rule of law, governance and public administration and the participation in ASEAN mechanisms on human rights issues.

105. Mexico congratulated the progress made since the first review, including the establishment of mechanisms to follow up international human rights commitments, and that of the National Steering Committee.

106. The delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic highlighted that the Government had adopted a new National Plan of Action to Prevent and Eliminate Violence against Women and Children 2014–2020. The National Assembly had also adopted the Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Children.

107. The delegation also highlighted that the Government had attached significant importance to maintaining public budget allocation to the health and education sectors. In the area of maternal and child health, the Government had enacted a series of health and nutrition policies and plans of actions, which includes several explicit targets for the child and maternal health.

108. In response to concerns raised about birth registration, the delegation stated that the Government had developed the National Strategy and Plan of Action on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics. In support of this work, a survey was currently being conducted to assess potential opportunities for a digital birth registration system.

109. With regard to early child marriage, the Family Law had been amended in 2008 to set the legal age of marriage at 18. However, the delegation acknowledged that challenges remained in implementing the law.

110. In addition, the delegation highlighted that the Government had amended the Labour Law in 2013 to set the minimum working age at 14 years and to allow children to be employed in "light work" from 12 years of age. The Labour Law also introduced a new provision prohibiting hazardous work for all persons under 18.

111. The Government attaches great importance to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals relating to the empowerment of women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action and other international and regional instruments relating to the rights of women. The Government also pays attention to the elimination of negative attitudes towards women and to removing obstacles in the implementation of its policy on the promotion of gender roles and women's rights.

112. Mongolia appreciated the legislation promoting reform and accountability and acknowledged constructive engagement with civil society and international mechanisms. It welcomed the ratification of CAT while encouraging the ratification of other international human rights instruments and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

113. Montenegro noted the establishment of an inter-agency mechanism to promote and protect human rights. It noted that the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) had expressed concern regarding early marriage within certain ethnic groups, and had requested the Government to elaborate on its activities to eliminate this practice.

114. Morocco commended measures to promote the rule of law and social, economic and cultural rights prioritizing poverty reduction, as well as to graduate from the status of least developed country by 2020. It appreciated accession to CAT and associated constitutional and legislative measures, particularly within penitentiary establishments.

115. Myanmar noted that the country's gross domestic product had recorded an approximately 8 per cent annual increase as a result of the implementation of the Seventh National Socioeconomic Development Plan (2011–2015).

116. Namibia noted the contributions made to regional development of human rights. It praised reform actions, expressing hope for the successful implementation of the Legal Sector Master Plan on the Development of the Rule of Law.

117. Singapore recognized policies to strengthen governance and better promote human rights. It noted programmes to reduce poverty, attain the Millennium Development Goals and graduate from the status of least developed country. It expressed concern about the disappearance of Sombath Somphone and urged the expeditious resolution of the case.

118. The Netherlands appreciated the ratification of CAT and encouraged the Lao People's Democratic Republic to continue its accession to core human rights treaties. While noting the shrinking space for civil society, it expressed serious concerned about enforced disappearances, particularly the unresolved case of Sombath Somphone.

119. New Zealand commended the role given to civil society and NGOs in supporting social and development objectives in the country. It also commended ongoing commitments to improving access to and the quality of basic education, especially for women and girls.

120. The head of the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic highlighted that the Lao People's Democratic Republic looked forward to continuing its cooperation and engagement in the UPR process to further exchange experience and lessons and to learn the best practices on human rights implementation from other countries, on the basis of sovereign equality, trust and mutual respect.

II. Conclusions and/or recommendations**

121. **The following recommendations will be examined by the Lao People's Democratic Republic, which will provide responses in due time, but no later than the twenty-ninth session of the Human Rights Council, from 15 June–3 July 2015:**

121.1. **Continue to exert efforts to accede to the international human rights instruments to which it is not yet a party (Republic of Korea);**

121.2. **Ratify additional human rights conventions and reinforce efforts to combat child labour (Angola);**

121.3. **Ratify the remaining international human rights conventions and continue without delay to harmonize its national legislation with the international obligations of the Lao People's Democratic Republic's under the**

** The conclusions and recommendations have not been edited.

respective human rights conventions, and implement them in policy and practice and strengthen its legal complaints system to ensure that most vulnerable groups have effective access to justice (Finland);

121.4. **Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (ICCPR-OP-2) (Montenegro);/accede to ICCPR-OP 2, aimed at abolition of the death penalty (Poland);**

121.5. **Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Italy);**

121.6. **Ratify the Second Optional to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty; the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Portugal);**

121.7. **Consider acceding to or ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Slovenia);**

121.8. **Abolish the death penalty, and sign and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (ICCPR) (Sweden);**

121.9. **Embark on the path to definitely abolishing the death penalty, and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Luxembourg);**

121.10. **Become a party to the optional protocols to ICCPR and CEDAW (Canada);**

121.11. **Ratify CEDAW and its Optional Protocol (Algeria);**

121.12. **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (Switzerland; Uruguay);**

121.13. **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Paraguay);**

121.14. **Ratify the OP-CAT and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Honduras);**

121.15. **Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (Algeria; Honduras; Uruguay);**

121.16. **Consider the possibility of ratifying the ICRMW (Egypt);**

121.17. **Consider ratifying the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (Indonesia);**

121.18. **Consider accelerating its efforts towards its ratification of the migrant workers' rights convention (ICRMW) and of other international human rights instruments that it is not yet a party to (Philippines);**

121.19. **Ratify ICRMW and the optional protocols of CAT, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and CEDAW (Sierra Leone);**

121.20. **Implement its commitment made during the 2010 UPR to ratify and implement the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Netherlands);**

121.21. **Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Canada; Spain);**

121.22. **Ratify without reservations the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Uruguay);**

121.23. **Consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and establish an independent commission to carry out impartial investigations in a prompt, impartial and effective manner into the alleged cases of enforced disappearances reported in the country (Italy);**

121.24. **Ratify the ICPPED and adopt implementing legislation, as well as mechanisms to independently investigate and identify perpetrators of those crimes (Brazil);**

121.25. **Conclude the process of ratification of the ICPPED shortly, and investigate vigorously all cases of enforced disappearances, including the case of civil society activist, Sombath Somphone, and inform the public transparently about the results of such investigation as far as feasible without endangering the investigation, and bring perpetrators to justice (Germany);**

121.26. **Ratify the ICPPED and modify the legislation accordingly; conduct independent and in-depth investigations on the cases of disappearances, in order to prosecute the perpetrators (France);**

121.27. **Ratify the ICPPED and define the crime of enforced disappearances as an offence in view of investigating and punishing such acts of crime (Argentina);**

121.28. **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Spain);**

121.29. **Accede to and fully align its national legislation with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and accede to the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Court (Estonia);**

121.30. **Accede to and fully align its national legislation with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, including by incorporating provisions to cooperate promptly and fully with the Court (Montenegro);**

121.31. **Ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (France);**

121.32. **Accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and to the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Court (Italy);**

121.33. **Accede to and fully align its national legislation with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Latvia);**

121.34. **Accede to the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court (Luxembourg);**

121.35. **Ratify the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court and the ICRMW (Ghana);**

121.36. **Continue implementing the obligations under the international human rights treaties ratified by the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Kuwait);**

121.37. **Revise the Penal Code to make all new laws conform with international human rights standards, and repeal provisions of the law on media and the new decree on the Internet that criminalize basic human rights and subordinate individual rights to the interests of the state (Sweden);**

121.38. **Continue to incorporate the provisions of the human rights conventions, to which it is a party, in its national laws and development policies (Viet Nam);**

121.39. **Fully incorporate the major human rights treaties that the Lao People's Democratic Republic has ratified into its domestic laws and allocate adequate human and financial resources to implement the laws (Republic of Korea);**

121.40. **Continue the work on the implementation of the series of international human rights conventions, including those in the field of labour protection (Russian Federation);**

121.41. **Strengthen its efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals targets in the areas of maternal and child mortality and the environment by end of 2015, which is currently lacking behind (Bhutan);**

121.42. **Strengthen and seek further assistance from the international community to support its efforts towards development and in effectively implementing the recommendations arising from the UPR (Bhutan);**

121.43. **Enhance the implementation of the international human rights treaties, to which the Lao People's Democratic Republic is a party and the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration to benefit the entire Lao population (Cambodia);**

121.44. **Continue to reinforce efforts to support inclusive growth and prioritize budgetary allocations in primary education and in the reduction of malnutrition and maternal and infant mortality rates to achieve progress in the remaining Millennium Development Goals (India);**

121.45. **Take additional measures for the protection of women and children (Japan);**

121.46. **Further promote human rights culture in the country (Uzbekistan);**

121.47. **Further develop its sound and successful social policies to support the population, especially those most in need (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of));**

121.48. **Continue its national efforts, with the support and assistance of the international community, in the promotion and protection of human rights particularly in the realization of economic, social and cultural rights of its people (Bangladesh);**

121.49. **Continue with the efforts of realizing the targets of the Millennium Development Goals in the areas of nutrition, gender equality in primary education, reduction of maternal and child mortality (Sri Lanka);**

121.50. **Continue its efforts to reach the remaining targets of the Millennium Development Goals (Myanmar);**

121.51. **Continue the realization of all national efforts and international cooperation for the establishment of a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Chile);**

121.52. **Give continuity to strengthening of national human rights institutions and mechanisms (Nepal);**

121.53. **Establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Timor-Leste);**

121.54. **Establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Canada);**

121.55. **Establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Honduras);**

121.56. **Make efforts to establish an independent national human rights commission in accordance with the Paris Principles (India);**

121.57. **Ensure the creation of a strong, independent national human rights institution, which adheres to the Paris Principles (Latvia);**

121.58. **Establish a strong and independent national human rights institution in conformity with the Paris Principles (Costa Rica);**

121.59. **Consider establishing a national human rights institution compliant with the Paris Principles and provided with the necessary resources to adequately carry out its mandate (Portugal);**

121.60. **Consider establishing a national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles (Egypt);**

121.61. **Further mainstream the rights of the vulnerable populations into its formulation of the Eighth National Socioeconomic Development Plan for 2016–2020. Enhancing economic and social opportunities for women, children, persons with disabilities, and older persons should be clearly mentioned in the next National Plan in order to ensure full implementation at all levels and in all sectors of society (Thailand);**

121.62. **Adopt a National Action Plan on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security (Portugal);**

121.63. **Continue efforts in education and training on human rights, particularly for State agents and civil servants (Morocco);**

121.64. **Strengthen international and regional cooperation in the protection and promotion of human rights (Viet Nam);**

121.65. **Analyse the possibility of creating a system for the monitoring of international recommendations which would facilitate the systematization of the tracking of the recommendations of the treaty bodies and the mechanisms of the Human Rights Council (Paraguay);**

121.66. **Submit their outstanding and long overdue reports to the relevant treaty bodies (Sierra Leone);**

121.67. **Submit national reports to the treaty bodies, including the ICESCR, and issue a standing invitation to special procedures (Japan);**

121.68. **Cooperate more systematically with the treaty bodies and permit the visits by special procedures (Luxembourg);**

121.69. **Strengthen the national capacities through cooperation with the United Nations human rights mechanisms, particularly the special procedures (Morocco);**

121.70. **Issue a standing invitation to all special procedures (Ghana);**

121.71. **Issue a standing invitation to all United Nations special procedures (Hungary);**

121.72. **Issue a standing invitation to United Nations special rapporteurs to the country (Netherlands);**

121.73. **Extend a standing invitation to all mandate holders (Latvia);**

121.74. **Extend a permanent and open invitation to the special procedures of the Human Rights Council (Paraguay);**

121.75. **Extend, before the end of 2016, a standing invitation to the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression as well as to the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (Norway);**

121.76. **Extend an open invitation to the special procedures and follow the recommendations they have provided as well as those of the treaty bodies (Uruguay);**

121.77. **Request technical assistance and cooperation as deemed appropriate from the international community, including relevant United Nation and specialized agencies in respect of capacity development for human rights implementation (Mongolia);**

121.78. **Continue to seek assistance from the international community to attain its objectives of full implementation of human rights (Djibouti);**

121.79. **Put forward more efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and ensure greater women's empowerment, representation and advancement in all sectors (Republic of Korea);**

121.80. **Further promote measures for the advancement of women and address traditional stereotype attitudes which limit their self-development (Myanmar);**

121.81. **Pursue efforts to improve women's access to education and health services and strengthen their role in local development planning (India);**

121.82. **Ensure full participation of women in the monitoring mechanisms of the Law on Development and Protection of Women adopted in 2004 and carry out dissemination campaign among the whole population of the country, particularly in rural areas (Mexico);**

121.83. **Expressly prohibit the dissemination of ideas based on racial incitement and discrimination, giving full effect to article 4 of ICERD (Chile);**

121.84. **Ensure that all ethnic groups are treated equally and have equal access to social services, including health and education (Ghana);**

121.85. **Establish a moratorium on execution with a view to abolishing the death penalty for all crimes (Uruguay);**

121.86. **Establish a formal moratorium on the death penalty with a view to ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Australia);**

121.87. **Impose an immediate de jure moratorium on executions, with a view to the complete abolition of the death penalty for all crimes (Norway);**

121.88. **Declare a moratorium on executions pending the prompt abolition of the death penalty (Chile);**

121.89. **Institute an official moratorium on the passing of death sentences and on executions (Spain);**

121.90. **Formalize the moratorium on the death penalty in view of its abolition. Commute capital punishment into imprisonment (France);**

121.91. **Consider taking steps to formally establish a de jure moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to its legal abolition (Italy);**

121.92. **Restrict the application of the death penalty to the most serious crimes as a step towards the abolition of the death penalty (Spain);**

121.93. **Formally abolish the death penalty in law (Germany);**

121.94. **Carry out without further delay an independent, credible investigation into the unexplained disappearance of a human rights defender, Sombath Somphone, which occurred on 15 December 2012 in Vientiane (Luxembourg);**

121.95. **Carry out a prompt, independent and impartial investigation aimed at determining the fate or whereabouts of Sombath Somphone (Poland);**

121.96. **Undertake a thorough investigation, consistent with international practices and standards, into the disappearance of Sombath Somphone (Portugal);**

121.97. **Intensify the investigation into the disappearance of Sombath Somphone and accept external assistance in the investigation and make the results publicly known, and investigate in a transparent and credible manner all cases of enforced disappearances (Sweden);**

121.98. **Launch an impartial, efficient and in-depth investigation on the case of Sombath Somphone in accordance with the international obligations of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and submit the results of the investigation in a transparent manner (Switzerland);**

121.99. **Establish a thorough, transparent and impartial investigation into Sombath Somphone's disappearance, as recommended by the United Nations Special Rapporteurs (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

121.100. **Conduct an urgent and credible police investigation into the disappearance of Sombath Somphone, and communicate the findings, including to address any suspicions of government involvement in his abduction (Australia);**

121.101. **Undertake a thorough and credible investigation into the disappearance of Sombath Somphone and other cases of purported enforced disappearances (Canada);**

121.102. **Conduct a thorough and credible investigation into all and any unresolved cases of disappearances of civil society workers in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (New Zealand);**

121.103. **Define torture in its Criminal Procedure Code in accordance with the CAT standards (Serbia);**

121.104. **Include a definition of torture in line with CAT and add specific offences relating to torture and other ill-treatment into the relevant legislation (Hungary);**

121.105. **Guarantee ICRC unconditional and unrestricted access to local and central authorities as well as detention centres in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Switzerland);**

121.106. **Ensure that detained persons are treated humanely and given access to legal counsel and all allegations of torture in detention are properly investigated (Ghana);**

121.107. **Ensure the effective respect of international human rights standards for persons deprived of liberty by allocating the necessary resources (France);**

121.108. **Continue carrying out the principles contained in CAT, with a specific focus on the elimination of arbitrary detention, especially of minors, and of violence occurring at the hands of law enforcement personnel (Holy See);**

121.109. **Establish legislation which penalizes early marriage, adopting appropriate measures towards its elimination (Chile);**

121.110. **Ensure the implementation of national laws created to abolish early marriage and impose sanctions penalizing this practice (Sierra Leone);**

121.111. **Redouble efforts to ensure that children were not employed in situations that could be detrimental to their health, development or well-being (Timor-Leste);**

121.112. **Establish measures and programmes to eradicate human trafficking and gender-based violence, especially of women and girls (Sierra Leone);**

121.113. **Implement the national action plan to combat corruption, including strengthening of laws and enforcement, and provide greater resources to independent anti-corruption bodies (New Zealand);**

121.114. **Step up efforts to prevent and combat modern forms of slavery and human trafficking with special attention to the investigation and prosecution of all cases of sale and trafficking of children, including providing protection of child victims (Serbia);**

121.115. **Take concrete steps to tackle human trafficking, in particular by strengthening the work of the National Steering Committee on Anti-Human Trafficking (Sri Lanka);**

121.116. **Fully implement national legislation on trafficking and address root causes of trafficking (Slovenia);**

121.117. **Continue implementing the legislation against all forms of trafficking, and formulate a specific legislation to combat human trafficking, especially of women and children (Holy See);**

121.118. **Speed up the drafting of a law on Anti-Human Trafficking (Indonesia);**

121.119. **Further strengthen its national legislation to combat human trafficking (Iran (Islamic Republic of));**

121.120. **Adopt a law to combat human trafficking, sexual exploitation, as well as to ensure victim rehabilitation (Lebanon);**

121.121. **Strive to eradicate the root causes of human trafficking (Belarus);**

121.122. **Implement the national legislation against trafficking in persons to curb the high incidence of trafficking in the country (Ghana);**

121.123. **Continue its efforts in training and capacity-building programme for government and law enforcement officials in dealing with the issue of trafficking in persons, particularly women and girls (Malaysia);**

121.124. **Continue its efforts in implementing its Legal Sector Master Plan on the Development of the Rule of Law (Philippines);**

121.125. **Continue implementing the Legal Sector Master Plan on the Development of the Rule of Law to improve its legal framework and institutional mechanisms (Cuba);**

121.126. **Continue to strengthen the rule of law and improve governance (Singapore);**

121.127. **Endeavour to implement the obligations under article 14 of ICCPR, which comprehensively guarantees the right to a fair trial and the rights of the accused (Namibia);**

121.128. **Continue to provide effective protection for the family, as the natural and fundamental unit of society (Egypt);**

121.129. **Ensure de jure and de facto protection of fundamental freedoms in order to be in conformity with ICCPR that has been ratified by the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Regarding freedom of expression; lift the restrictions to freedom of press, ensure the independence and pluralism of media, and a safe environment for the work of journalists. Regarding freedom of association, facilitate unhindered action for human rights defenders and NGOs, notably through a reform of their registration system (France);**

121.130. **Ensure the protection of the rights of persons belonging to religious and other minorities and effectively investigate all alleged abuses and violations (Ireland);**

121.131. **Fully respect the right to freedom of religion, promotion of tolerance and inter-religious dialogue (Slovenia);**

121.132. **Reinforce respect for the rights to freedom of religion, freedom of conscience and free association (Holy See);**

121.133. **Amend the Prime Minister's Decree on Religious Practice (Decree 92) to ease the process for religious groups to register their places of worship and allow new religious groups to obtain official recognition (United States of America);**

121.134. **Intensify the dialogue with religious leaders in order to erase all remaining restrictions on religions by law (Hungary);**

121.135. **Decriminalize defamation and misinformation and remove all undue restrictions on freedom of expression from the Penal Code, the Law on Publications and the newly adopted Internet law in conformity with the country's international human rights obligations (Latvia);**

121.136. **Fully implement its obligations under ICCPR to respect and ensure the right to freedom of expression (Canada);**

121.137. **Amend provisions of the Penal Code, the law on media, the law on Internet and all other legislation that criminalizes the exercise of fundamental rights in order to align Lao's legislation with international standards in this sphere (Belgium);**

121.138. **Guarantee freedom of expression, the press, assembly and association, as well as freedom of religion and belief in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Uruguay);**

121.139. **Ensure that the right to freedom of expression and its other international human rights commitments are upheld in any move to adopt a cyber law (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

121.140. **Review its decree on Internet-based information control and management to ensure citizens' rights to information and expression are respected (Australia);**

121.141. **Ensure freedom of expression and media freedom, including Internet freedom by bringing its national legislation fully in line with international standards, including by decriminalizing defamation, misinformation and related offences in relevant national laws (Estonia);**

121.142. **Re-examine recent legislation that limits dissemination of certain information via the Internet, including through social media (New Zealand);**

121.143. **Promote the development of a free and open Internet by amending the Prime Minister's Decree, which appears to unduly limit the right to freedom of expression online (United States of America);**

121.144. **Take measures to ensure that all the legislation, especially on press and media, including digital media, is fully aligned with its international human rights obligations (Costa Rica);**

121.145. **Continue efforts to improve and facilitate access to the Internet and refrain from any restrictions on content other than permitted under international human rights law, in particular ICCPR (Germany);**

121.146. **Guarantee the effective exercise of freedom of expression, assembly and association by reforming its legislation particularly in order not to undermine the legitimate work of NGOs and human rights defenders (Luxembourg);**

121.147. **Reverse the approval of the Prime Minister's Decree on International Non-Governmental Organizations and implement the mechanisms necessary to accelerate the process of legalizing NGOs (Spain);**

121.148. **Refrain from undue restrictions, such as the prohibition to engage in the promotion and protection of human rights, in the elaboration of legislation on civil society organizations, and facilitate the registration of international NGOs (Germany);**

121.149. **Enable independent local and international NGOs, including international human rights organizations, to freely register and to operate in accordance with international law and standards (Norway);**

121.150. **Remove all restrictions in law and practice which infringe upon the work of civil societies and to ensure that all legal provisions on the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly are in line with international human rights standards (Poland);**

121.151. **Fully implement its international obligations to ensure the protection of human rights defenders and other civil society actors while exercising their human rights, including the freedom of expression, association and assembly, and remove all restrictions in law and practice which infringe on their work. The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic should establish without delay a new independent commission to undertake an impartial and thorough investigation into the enforced disappearance of Sombath Somphone (Finland);**

121.152. **Reconsider decrees and guidelines that are overly burdensome on domestic and international civil society organizations through lengthy and opaque registration requirements, taxation and other means (United States of America);**

121.153. **Facilitate an environment for local and international civil society organizations to fulfil their role (Australia);**

121.154. **Fully enable civil society and NGO groups to conduct their activities (New Zealand);**

121.155. **Create a framework where civil society, including active human rights NGOs, can be included in the follow-up to the UPR without any fear of retaliation (Belgium);**

121.156. **Take all necessary steps to protect human rights defenders from intimidation, ill-treatment or violence, including enforced disappearances, and to ensure prompt, impartial and thorough investigation of all allegations, including those of enforced disappearances (Ireland);**

121.157. **Further work in empowering women in decision-making (Ethiopia);**

121.158. **Continue its efforts in realizing the right to work through comprehensive policies for productive and decent employment (Egypt);**

121.159. **Bring labour law into full compliance with international labour standards, including the freedom of association (Ghana);**

121.160. **Continue efforts to improve standards of living, ensure broad access to quality education and health services (Uzbekistan);**

121.161. **Continue ongoing efforts of the Government towards increased realization of the human rights of its people, including through poverty alleviation measures and investment in health and education (Nepal);**

121.162. **Pursue its efforts to broadly reduce poverty (Djibouti);**

121.163. **Continue its efforts to eliminate poverty, especially in remote regions (Viet Nam);**

121.164. **Continue its efforts to adopt a development policy to meet the needs of the people to reduce poverty in order to protect and promote human rights (Yemen);**

121.165. **Continue its efforts in the eradication of poverty (Bangladesh);**

121.166. **Continue to implement the National Action Plan for Poverty Reduction in order to alleviate poverty and improve the standards of living (Kuwait);**

121.167. **Continue its efforts in socioeconomic development and poverty eradication with a view of achieving its Millennium Development Goals target (Malaysia);**

121.168. **Implement national socioeconomic policies and continue its efforts to alleviate poverty by 2015 and to graduate from the status of least developed country by 2020 (Cuba);**

121.169. **Intensify its efforts to promote inclusive growth, especially in the rural and mountainous areas (Thailand);**

121.170. **Ensure in the elaboration and implementation of the national land policy that economic, social and cultural as well as civil and political rights of all affected persons are fully respected, including by applying international standards such as the guidelines on land tenure and on responsible investment in agriculture of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in particular by providing full, adequate and effective compensation for expropriations and by recognizing and protecting customary land rights (Germany);**

121.171. **Enforce the moratorium on new land concessions announced by the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in June 2012 and reform the current system for the management of land leases and concessions (Poland);**

121.172. **Review existing land concessions and cancel or sanction those found to be violating the law (Sweden);**

121.173. **Continue the consolidation of its worthy programmes in health, leading towards universal quality health care for the whole population (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of));**

121.174. **Continue implementing policies to improve the general health of its population (Brunei Darussalam);**

121.175. **Continue the efforts to improve and develop health care infrastructure in remote areas in order to enable people for better health-care services (Democratic People's Republic of Korea);**

121.176. **Pay particular attention to the interests of children, especially with respect to health care and education, in its further work on improving the population's living standards (Belarus);**

121.177. **Continue its initiatives in the promotion and protection of the people's right to education (Brunei Darussalam);**

121.178. **Continue the implementation of ongoing national policies to guarantee for the multi-ethnic people to quality education (Democratic People's Republic of Korea);**

121.179. **Continue its educational reform towards comprehensive and inclusive education policies, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups, including children (Iran (Islamic Republic of));**

121.180. **Sustain efforts for children to have better access to education at various levels (Myanmar);**

121.181. **Continue socioeconomic reforms to better the lives of its people, in particular by investing in education (Singapore);**

121.182. **Continue to work to address issues such as a lack of teachers, school facilities and the marked differences between the quality of educational institutions in urban and rural areas (New Zealand);**

121.183. **Remedy school dropouts, especially in the rural areas (Djibouti);**

121.184. **Continue to address the problem of children who drop out of school (Lebanon);**

121.185. **Adopt legislation to prohibit the collection of school fees and take the necessary measures to ensure free and universal access to education regardless of gender, ethnicity, mother tongue, religion, belief, disability or social condition (Mexico);**

121.186. **Increase input in poverty reduction, implement the Eighth National Socioeconomic Development Plan, increase input in education, and further increase girls enrolment rate (China);**

121.187. **Increase efforts to promote and protect the cultural rights of the Lao people to preserve the national culture and the cultures and languages of ethnic groups in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Cambodia);**

121.188. **Provide more financial and technical support for the preservation of Lao traditional and cultural heritage (Ethiopia);**

121.189. **Continue work on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities (Russian Federation);**

121.190. **Adopt all the legislative and policy measures to guarantee a comprehensive inclusion of persons with disabilities in all spheres of activities to ensure the full enjoyment of their rights (Honduras);**

121.191. **Acknowledge and guarantee the indigenous peoples' rights, including by fully engaging indigenous peoples of the country in decision-making in all the matters that affect them (Estonia);**

121.192. **Strengthen cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in order to adopt legal and administrative measures to guarantee respect of the principle of non-refoulement and to ratify the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Argentina);**

121.193. **Continue to modernize its birth registration system and improve access to remote locations, and step up efforts to ensure free and universal birth registration (Brazil);**

121.194. **Adopt legal and administrative provisions for the issuance of free birth certificates for all children born in the national territory, and for the establishment of civil registry offices in all districts, including rural districts (Mexico);**

121.195. **Continue efforts to modernize its birth registration system, and evaluate if more steps are needed to ensure access to universal birth registration in order to ensure the rights of children to nationality is adequately protected (Namibia);**

121.196. **Respect all its national and international obligations regarding forcibly displaced persons (Switzerland).**

122. **All conclusions and/or recommendations contained in the present report reflect the position of the submitting State(s) and/or the State under review. They should not be construed as endorsed by the Working Group as a whole.**

Annex

[English only]

Composition of the delegation

The delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic was headed by H.E. Mr. Phongsavath Boupha, Minister, Head of the President's Office, Chairman of National Steering on Human Rights and composed of the following members:

- H.E. Prof. Mr. Ket Kiettisak, Vice Minister of Justice, Deputy Head of Delegation;
- H.E. Mr. Khamsao Kaysong, Member of the National Assembly, Vice President of Ethnic Affairs Committee, the National Assembly;
- H.E. Mr. Thongphane Savanphet, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva;
- Mr. Phoukhong Sisoulath, Director General, Department of Treaties and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Ms. Phavanh Nuanthasing, Director General, Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Mr. Chit Thavisay, Director General, Planning and Cooperation Office, the National Board on Rural Development and Poverty Reduction;
- Mr. Viengthavisone Thephachanh, Director General, Department of Foreign Affairs, the National Assembly;
- Mr. Ampha Simmasone, Director General, Department of Public Administration Development, Ministry of Home Affairs;
- Mr. Pineprathana Phanthamaly, Director General, Department of Mass Media, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism;
- Mr. Saveng Phommaly, Director General, Department of Corrections and Detention Centers, Ministry of Public Security;
- Ms. Chansoda Phonethip, Head of the Secretariat of the Lao National Commission for the Advancement of Women;
- Ms. Chongchit Chantharanonh, Head of the Secretariat of the National Commission for Mothers and Children;
- Ms. Viengvone Kittavong, Minister Counsellor, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva;
- Mr. Thavone Vongphosy, Deputy Director General, Department of Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment;
- Mr. Bounpheng Saykanya, Deputy Director General, Department of Treaties and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Mr. Bovonethat Douangchak, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva;

- Mr. Vongvilay Thiphalangsy, Director, Human Rights Division, Department of Treaties and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Mr. Thepthavone Sengmany, Director, News Research and Analysis Division, Press Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Mr. Thiphasone Sengsourinha, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations in New York;
- Mr. Sengpraarthid Snookphone, Deputy Director, Human Rights Division, Department of Treaties and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Mr. Xayfhong Sengdara, Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva;
- Mr. Phetvanxay Khousakoun, Interpreter, Department of Treaties and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Ms. Souksavanh Vichittavong, Camera woman, attaché, Permanent Mission of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva.